UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION

TEDDY GLENN BOSTIC, SR.,

Plaintiff,

v.

Civil Action 2:19-cv-1231
Judge James L. Graham
Magistrate Judge Chelsey M. Vascura

CHRISTOPHER WRAY, *et al.*,

Defendants.

ORDER and REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Plaintiff, Teddy Glenn Bostic, Sr., an Ohio resident proceeding without the assistance of counsel, has submitted a request to file a civil action *in forma pauperis*. (ECF No. 1.) The Court **GRANTS** Plaintiff's request to proceed *in forma pauperis*. All judicial officers who render services in this action shall do so as if the costs had been prepaid. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). This matter is also before the Court for the initial screen of Plaintiff's Complaint as required by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) to identify cognizable claims and to recommend dismissal of Plaintiff's Complaint, or any portion of it, which is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). Having performed the initial screen, for the reasons that follow, it is **RECOMMENDED** that the Court **DISMISS** this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii).

I.

Congress enacted 28 U.S.C. § 1915, the federal *in forma pauperis* statute, seeking to "lower judicial access barriers to the indigent." *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 31 (1992). In doing so, however, "Congress recognized that 'a litigant whose filing fees and court costs are assumed by the public, unlike a paying litigant, lacks an economic incentive to refrain from filing frivolous, malicious, or repetitive lawsuits.'" *Id*. at 31 (quoting *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324 (1989)). To address this concern, Congress included subsection (e)[1], which provides in pertinent part as follows:

> (2) Notwithstanding any filing fee, or any portion thereof, that may have been paid, the court shall dismiss the case at any time if the court determines that--
>
> * * *
>
> (B) the action or appeal--
>
> (i) is frivolous or malicious;
>
> (ii) fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted; or . . . .

28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i) & (ii); *Denton*, 504 U.S. at 31. Thus, § 1915(e) requires *sua sponte* dismissal of an action upon the Court's determination that the action is frivolous or malicious, or upon determination that the action fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.

To properly state a claim upon which relief may be granted, a plaintiff must satisfy the basic federal pleading requirements set forth in Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a). *See also Hill v. Lappin*, 630 F.3d 468, 470–71 (6th Cir. 2010) (applying Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standards to review under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915A and 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii)). Under Rule 8(a)(2), a complaint must contain a "short and plain statement of the claim showing that the

[1]Formerly 28 U.S.C. § 1915(d).

pleader is entitled to relief." Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). Thus, Rule 8(a) "imposes legal *and* factual demands on the authors of complaints." *16630 Southfield Ltd., P'Ship v. Flagstar Bank, F.S.B.*, 727 F.3d 502, 503 (6th Cir. 2013).

Although this pleading standard does not require "'detailed factual allegations,' . . . [a] pleading that offers 'labels and conclusions' or 'a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action,'" is insufficient. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). A complaint will not "suffice if it tenders 'naked assertion[s]' devoid of 'further factual enhancement.'" *Id.* (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 557). Instead, to survive a motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim under Rule 12(b)(6), "a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter . . . to 'state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.'" *Id*. (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570). Facial plausibility is established "when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Id.* "The plausibility of an inference depends on a host of considerations, including common sense and the strength of competing explanations for the defendant's conduct." *Flagstar Bank* , 727 F.3d at 504 (citations omitted). Further, when considering a *pro se* plaintiff's Complaint, a Court "must read [the allegations] with less stringency . . . and accept the pro se plaintiff's allegations as true, unless they are clearly irrational or wholly incredible." *Reynosa v. Schultz*, 282 F. App'x 386, 389 (6th Cir. 2008) (citing *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992) (internal citation omitted).

II.

Plaintiff names Christopher Wray, the acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and Betsy DeVos, the acting Secretary of Education, as Defendants. The undersigned notes that in a prior recent action, 2:18-cv-971-MHW-CMV (the "971 Case"),

Plaintiff similarly named a number of FBI employees and officials. In the 971 case, which was dismissed pursuant to § 1915(e), Plaintiff alleged that the FBI conspired with his son's employer and neighbor to orchestrate the murder of his son.

In this action, Plaintiff alleges that the FBI Director and the Secretary of Education conspired to deduct $100 per month from his Social Security Disability Benefits. Plaintiff alleges that he did his best to repay his student loans but that he struggled after going through a divorce, bankruptcy, the death of his son, and a job loss, all of which he alleges are the fault of the FBI and the Columbus Police Department. According to Plaintiff, he qualified for loan forgiveness in 2017, at which point, no money was deducted from his Social Security Disability Benefits. He alleges that Columbus City Officials kicked him out of his tent home under a bridge in 2019, forcing him to now live in his car with his two dogs. Plaintiff appears to further allege that as a result of this incident, $100 is now being deducted from his Social Security Disability Benefits. Plaintiff explains that he decided to file the instant action because an FBI agent called him laughing about the $100 deduction in his benefits. Plaintiff alleges that these agents conspired with FBI Director Christopher Wray and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to make false claims for the amount he owes on his student loans. Plaintiff concludes that this action "is just another act of harassment from the FBI," explaining that he has experienced harassment from the FBI for the past twenty-five years. (Compl. ECF No. 1-1 at PAGIED # 10.) In terms of relief, Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief and $100,000.

As best as the undersigned can discern, Plaintiff seeks to assert a claim for civil conspiracy. "A civil conspiracy is an agreement between two or more persons to injure another by unlawful action." *Spadafore v. Gardner*, 330 F.3d 849, 854 (6th Cir. 2003); *see also Hooks v. Hooks*, 771 F.2d 935 (6th Cir. 1985). A plaintiff is required to demonstrate "a single plan, that

the alleged coconspirator shared in the general conspiratorial objective, and that an overt act was committed in furtherance of the conspiracy that caused injury to the complainant." *Hooks*, 771 F.2d at 943-44. In addition, "[c]laims of conspiracy must be pled with some specificity: vague and conclusory allegations that are unsupported by material facts are not sufficient to state a § 1983 claim." *Farhat v. Jopke*, 370 F.3d 580, 599 (6th Cir. 2004); *see also Fieger v. Cox*, 524 F.3d 770, 776 (6th Cir. 2008) ("[P]leading requirements governing civil conspiracies are relatively strict." (citation omitted)).

The undersigned concludes that Plaintiff has failed to plausibly allege with sufficient specificity a claim for civil conspiracy. Moreover, the allegations Plaintiff sets forth in his Complaint are so implausible as to render his Complaint frivolous. A claim is frivolous if it lacks "an arguable basis either in law or in fact." *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). The former occurs when "indisputably meritless" legal theories underlie the complaint, and the latter when it relies on "fantastic or delusional" allegations. *Id*. at 327–28. This Court is not required to accept the factual allegations set forth in a complaint as true when such factual allegations are "clearly irrational or wholly incredible." *Ruiz v. Hofbauer*, 325 F. App'x 427, 429–30 (6th Cir. 2009) (citing *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992)). Because Plaintiff's claims are predicated on allegations that rise to the level of being "irrational or wholly incredible" and "fantastic or delusional," his Complaint fails to meet the facial plausibility standard such that it is legally frivolous. It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the Court dismiss this action pursuant to Section 1915(e)(2).

III.

For the reasons set forth above, it is **RECOMMENDED** that the Court **DISMISS** this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) for failure to state a claim on which relief may be granted.

PROCEDURE ON OBJECTIONS

If any party objects to this Report and Recommendation, that party may, within fourteen (14) days of the date of this Report, file and serve on all parties written objections to those specific proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made, together with supporting authority for the objection(s). A Judge of this Court shall make a *de novo* determination of those portions of the Report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made. Upon proper objections, a Judge of this Court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made herein, may receive further evidence or may recommit this matter to the Magistrate Judge with instructions. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

The parties are specifically advised that failure to object to the Report and Recommendation will result in a waiver of the right to have the District Judge review the Report and Recommendation *de novo,* and also operates as a waiver of the right to appeal the decision of the District Court adopting the Report and Recommendation. *See Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Walters*, 638 F.2d 947 (6th Cir. 1981).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/s/ *Chelsey M. Vascura*
CHELSEY M. VASCURA
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE